

People With a Disability Can Get a Ticket to Work

Millions of Americans receive disability benefits from Social Security and there could be good news for many of those who want to work. A free and voluntary program called Ticket to Work gives individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) access to meaningful employment while maintaining control over benefit choices. Ed Bairos, a farmer and mechanic, went back to the work he loved with the help of the Ticket program. Ed went on SSDI after suffering from severe arthritis, complicated by a knee injury that would require 20 surgeries. He was concerned about losing the cash payments and health care he needed to survive and worried that employers might not want to hire him.

Then Bairos learned about the Ticket to Work program when he received a notice in the mail from Social Security. The notice was a “Ticket” that Bairos could use with an Employment Network of his choosing. Employment Networks are organizations that offer specialized services such as career counseling, job search assistance, vocational rehabilitation and training. Bairos decided to use his ticket with the Ticket to Success/

“Returning to work has made me whole again, especially being able to work in the area that I love. My self-esteem was at its lowest when I wasn’t working and on disability. Returning to work not only improved my self-worth but also my financial wealth. The Ticket to Work program and the ability to keep my Medicare was the reason I was able to return to work.”

- Ed Bairos



Tulare County Office of Education and returned to work. He continued to receive health care and cash benefits because of Work Incentives, which are special considerations that make it easier for beneficiaries to explore whether going back to work is right for them. Pleased with Bairos’ industry knowledge and skills as a farm manager, his employer gave him a promotion and a raise. Now he is self-sufficient, working for another division within the company.

Bairos earns more money than he would have by relying solely on SSDI. By using his “Ticket,” Bairos’ medical reviews were put on hold and he is eligible to receive Medicare coverage for up to eight and a half years after discontinuing his SSDI payments.

If you receive SSI/SSDI benefits, are between 18 and 64 years old and want to work, getting started is easy. Call (866) 968- 7842 (TDD (866) 833-2967) to learn how going back to work may affect your benefits. You can also visit www.ssa.gov/work for more information on the Ticket to Work program and work incentives. # # #